

6-10-2009

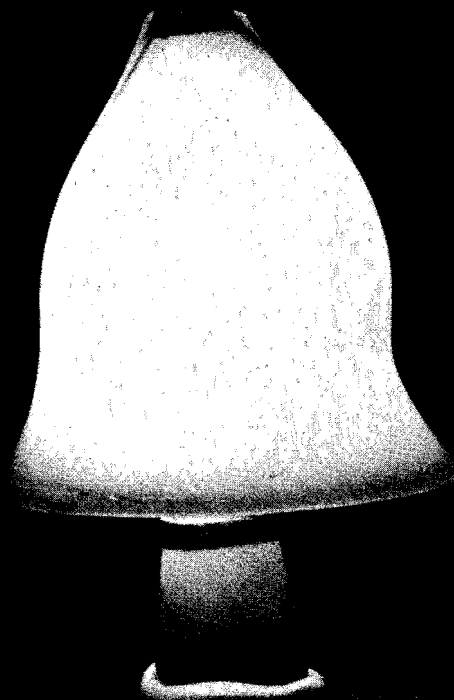
Aldebaran Vol. 4, Issue 1

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.rwu.edu/aldebaran>

Recommended Citation

(1974) "Aldebaran Vol. 4, Issue 1," *Aldebaran*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 1.
Available at: <http://docs.rwu.edu/aldebaran/vol4/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Aldebaran by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.



ALDEBARAN

EDITORIAL PROCEDURE

The board of ALDEBARAN of Roger Williams College accepts submissions from all students, faculty members, and also from outside contributors who enclose a return address. Submissions are separated and classified as "prose," "poetry," or "art" and then given to a group of readers according to classification. The readers criticize all submissions from a reprint of the material which excludes the author's name. The criticisms and recommendations are then given to either the prose or poetry editor, who then meets with his board to discuss the submissions and reach a decision on acceptances and rejections. All of the accepted material is read by the editor-in-chief and discussed by the editors together. In addition, all submissions are reviewed after the magazine deadline, and the final format is then decided upon.

It is the policy of the board that no submissions are returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Mail with postage due will be refused. Xeroxes and carbons will be returned unread. We would appreciate receiving appropriate notices and publications.

The Editors

Vol. 4, No. 1 published December 1974
Printed by Charles G. Cowan Associates, Providence, R. I.

Roger Williams College, Bristol, Rhode Island
© by ALDEBARAN 1974

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VerKuilen Ager	Heat Wave	1
Anthony P. Jarzombek	Modjeska Canyon	2
	Poem	3
Doug Myers	Photograph	4
Bruce Allen	Poem	5
John Smolens	Feeding Enemy Mosquitoes	6
Titus Blade Steele	Ink Drawing	9
Maria Flook	Rodeo Colleen	10
VerKuilen Ager	That's Entertainment	11
Titus Blade Steele	Ink Drawing	13
Kim Horton	The Mouse Manifesto	14
Louis Phillips	Glancing at a Vietnamese Dictionary	15
Richard Yelle	Photograph	16
Lowell Uda	Chapel Custodian	17
Portrait	Otto Van Kopenhagen	32
Alan Britt	Dialogue of a Young Man And a Hibiscus	33
Kim Horton	With All Due Respect	34
Titus Blade Steele	Ink Drawing	35
Lisa DuBois	Forty Year Slump	36
Doug Myers	Photograph	37
Kim Horton	Full Moon	38
Maria Flook	Getting You Born	39
	Contributor Notes	40

VerKuilen Ager

HEAT WAVE

A neighborhood puppy
failed the august gauntlet
of our road

A black cowled auto struck
the terror to the stone
smashed his skull
fuzzy little legs went
flip flop flip flop
children chanted
oh mommy no no no

The general practitioner
who lives on the corner
came bare-gut and Bermuda shorts
from his garage
with the snowshovel
scooped up the body
steadied one little leg
still barely going
flip flop

Despite these rites
rains were denied
thirteen more days

Anthony P. Jarzombek

MODJESKA CANYON

1.

A bird sanctuary flourishes
in the heat

For those who endure
there is solitude — a place
to sit
and listen

2.

I climb walls
turn rocks
walk the south rim
puncture condor eggs and listen:
they whistle as they drop

I jump and strike at silence
beneath falling feathers:
search with patience
for the lost aria

3.

During rains
Modjeska Canyon floods
The washed-out ghost
house floats
broken
down
brown streams
as if it were made
of curtain cloth
and encores

Anthony P. Jarzombek

recalling
lives stolen from counts
and princes

4.

I have yet to crawl
dusty yellow from
deep furrows of old
newspapers

run my eyes across
linotype fingerprints

I dream
of nails
and bits of cloth
in my pockets

POEM

The full moon
has set your shadow
in soft sand

carry this flower
briefly in the night.



Bruce Allen

POEM

Your eyes vacant mirrors,
no comfort for old women.

Your eyes swat the moon.

Your eyes whisper
soft pastels on the wall,
a quiet,
unearthly presence
slipping down
smooth,
cool tile.

Your eyes a noble Indian,
peering through antique glass.

Your eyes an evasive eight ball.

Your eyes, your sad, crooning
moist eyes, muffled
in black bags and carried away . . .

Your eyes, fall gently on the town.

John Smolens

FEEDING ENEMY MOSQUITOES

Each day at one in the afternoon I feed the enemy's mosquitoes. I used to carry a pass with their writing on it, but the guards at the Research Gate recognize me now. They smile as I approach, stamp out their cigarettes and unlock the gate. They only speak a few commands in English like "Stop" and "Move", but they don't seem to enjoy using them. They all say "Hi!" whenever they see a prisoner alone, and one of them can say, "Don't worry. It is raining." You could feel sorry for the enemy guards, they don't have it any better than the prisoners. They are good about sharing what food comes to camp and they cry when they show you pictures of their women. When they rough up a prisoner it is usually out of frustration over their own situation. I am somewhat special, and when they see me in the Research Building they are extra cordial.

For feeding the mosquitoes I receive a bowl of soup with bread or maybe a potato in it. The prisoners volunteer for everything for just that reason.

The doctor thinks I am very careful with the mosquitoes so I've kept the job. He speaks English and has explained how precious the mosquitoes are. Their troops have spent valuable time catching the mosquitoes and they must be kept alive. Their purpose is to help the doctor develop an efficient mosquito spray for the troops in the jungle.

All I have to do is go to the laboratory where he is experimenting with the sprays, take the cover off the hole in the side of the mosquito tank and stick my bare arm inside. Immediately dozens

John Smolens

Feeding Enemy Mosquitoes

of mosquitoes light on my arm. They walk around prodding and then sink in and begin to draw blood. I alternate arms from day to day and my skin has become insensitive. I used to try to distinguish individual mosquitoes and give them names, but that proved tedious.

I have been cautioned about one thing: do not flex my arm while the mosquitoes are feeding. I do this ever so slightly when the doctor isn't looking. A mosquito or two will fill up suddenly and explode, spattering blood and the black fragments of its body on my skin. But I only do this when the doctor is at a safe distance. I would never be allowed to volunteer for an experiment again, and I want my soup.

There are some prisoners who are jealous of my position, and when I leave the yard a little before one o'clock they look at me and spit in the dirt. They are usually the ones who refuse to volunteer. I don't feel guilt or sympathy towards them. That is long past. They should have learned by now. But I am somewhat baffled by their ability to feel jealousy. When I look at the guards or even the doctors, I don't feel jealous. They seem as miserable as the prisoners. I don't understand how jealousy can be aroused here. Everyone seems to have it the same. But the prisoners who won't volunteer and are jealous seem capable of things I am not. I see them cry. They will be standing somewhere or just sitting and they will begin to cry. I see them pound one fist into the other or slap their thighs as they walk. I have tried these things but they don't work. I guess I am jealous of their jealousy.

John Smolens

Feeding Enemy Mosquitoes

Today it is raining. When I reach the Research Gate at one o'clock the guard says, "Hi! Don't worry. It is raining." We have a cigarette and talk about the weather, and then I go inside. The doctor cordially greets me in English but he doesn't talk about the weather.

I put my arm in the tank and watch the mosquitoes go to town. I am tired of mosquitoes feeding on my blood. I am tired of the prisoners who won't volunteer feeding off what they think is my good fortune. I make a fist and flex my arm with a jerk. Mosquitoes are exploding everywhere. Again and again I flex my arm. The mosquitoes are in a frenzy. The movement of my arm scatters them, but the scent of blood arouses them and they keep trying to land and sink in. The doctor crosses the laboratory in a rage and hits me on the shoulder. He pulls me from the tank, quickly covers the hole and calls for the guard. Angry orders are given and the guard tells me to move. I am pushed out of the building, through the gate, into the yard where the other prisoners are milling around.

Tonight, when the doctor asks for a volunteer to feed the mosquitoes, I will be splendidly jealous, I hope.



Maria Flook

RODEO COLLEEN

Your jaw, strong and lemon-colored
in the soft barn light. Your chin
is the sharpest thing here, like a
small broken rock. You're saddling
that chestnut gelding, your shoulders
leaning into him, tilting him. You are
a big girl. You are irish-italian. '
Your mascara is the color of your blue jeans
like lint in your eyes.

Why did I hate you and love your calves
hidden in the canvas boots. Why did you
treat me like shit when I was crippled
with something, my lips swelling into my teeth.

You have two babies now in Wilmington
Delaware, that stone jaw grinding as you
zip yourself into spandex. I remember the
lather falling from Bronc like suds, I remember
your own sweat crawling leaf-like up your back.
You were a hard rider, suddenly it was feminine
to perspire on horseback. I struggled hard but
could only produce an invisible humidity within
myself. You browbeated me, you lied and didn't
know me. I wonder if that tan saddle waits any
longer for the cool draft of your crevices.

VerKuilen Ager

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT (FORMERLY RELEASED AS "MOVEE")

Inside
bubblegum padded seats
lights fall curtains open
audience sifts some straight some slouch
traffic to lobby rest rooms water fountain
candy counter smoking lounge finally dwindles
some stragglers wander up and down squinting
in the dark one golden-age couple shuffles
down the aisle with hat still on top coat
two almond joys melt in one hand old lady by the other
newsreel combat scene reflects off his pinkey ring off
her decked out like society fit to kill Paris scarf
leather gloves clutch polished cane as both squeeze
down row between seat backs and knees finally stop
"hey move over and you there shift down one
this way we want two together" after thought "please"
starts placing coat and wife still standing hat on
people shuffling seats jackets mufflers mittens milky ways
can barely see Bugs Bunny between around through
kid in next row turns around and says "will you shut up
please" Clark Gable grins old fellow takes off hat
"well don't get fresh with me" swats kid
wino in adjacent section stands yells "whas goin on" drops
near full bottle muscatel runs under several seats
"son of a" mutters girl with marinated shoes soaked socks
throws buttered popcorn at drunk
usher asks both to leave baby starts crying
coughs cries coughs throws up mother rushes it out
towards lobby concerned father goes to follow
trips over wino just passed out in aisle usher panics

VerKuilen Ager

clubs both with flashlight Bogart gives the high sign
water balloon from balcony scores bullseye on usher
old man continues slapping kid with hat and kid finally
pulls switchblade old lady parries with cane
golden-age hubby and spouse knobble-knee back across row go
out side door under "exit" sign traffic and siren sounds
smell of wet pavement cold air and raw light crash in
revealing two guys in raincoats doing funny things
in front row kids mouth full of dubble bubble dance up
point and sing-song "ha ha yoo-hoo ya ha"
Kathryn Hepburn nods approval as manager and wet usher
drag wino into lobby and beat the snot out of him
eventually pitch him limp beyond door into Broadway
candy counter patrons plus those coming out of
gentleman's and gentlewomen's rooms watch
this second feature Cary Grant claps hands
barks like a seal all's quiet on various fronts
baby hiccups in lobby while concerned mother
kisses lump on father's noggin usher nurses knuckles
under cold water spigot vows to find quiet job in pizza joint
manager escorts off-duty ticket girl through door
marked "private" while outside dog pees on leg of wino
who revives waves off imaginary help looks at marquee
gets in line buys ticket does tip toe
through lobby takes seat next to school teacher
smelling of cigarettes and sen sen
Mickey Rooney kisses Judy Garland wino starts applauding
yells out "now she's gonna have a bay-bee"
usher reloads flashlight Judy's eyes open wide
and she whispers
"gee whiz"



Kim L. Horton

THE MOUSE MANIFESTO

for Aunt Ruth

There's not much I can say about blood,
or the lack of it.

A great deal of time is spent, filling closets
and emptying closets.

And living in the darkness of the light
bulb, surrounded by the wood
of the other man's dreams. It's
vacuous. We call it memories.

We are satisfied. We get up,
move, lie back down. Turn
around, someone's dead.

Or dying, or worse. There
seems to be no trust. None.

Another guitarist falls to
the concrete. His music,
was beautiful, we think.

We fill closets, we empty
closets. I have to shake
my head. I really do.

I see only two sets
of rules.

The living
and those who have
taken a bribe.

Louis Phillips

GLANCING AT A VIETNAMESE DICTIONARY

LO XA

Far-sighted, reminding me
Of Loxias,
Who could see the future.
To cross Loxias
Means to be punished,
For that is what prophesy portends:
The punishments we undergo.

TON

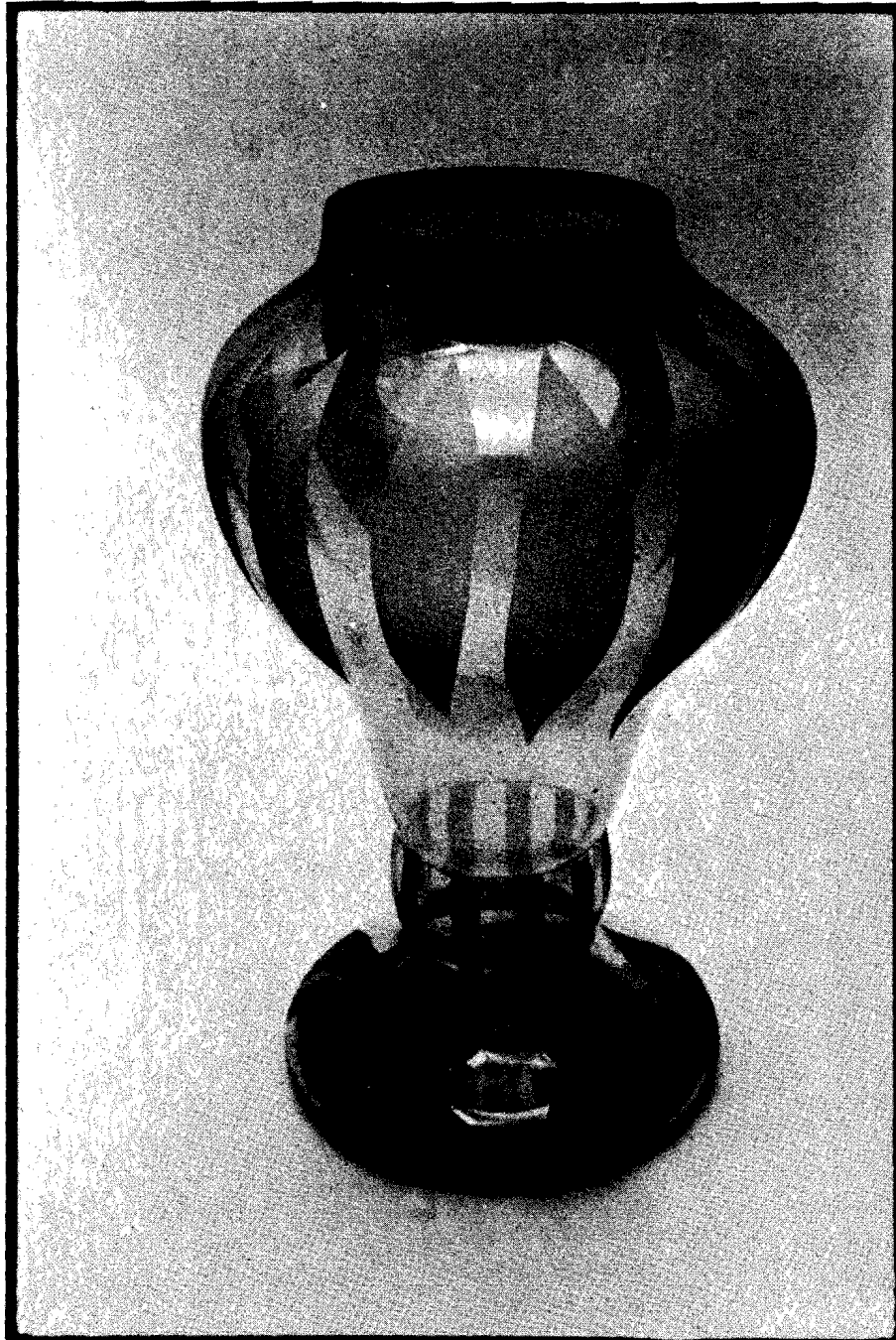
Costly, expensive,
Tons & tons & tons of
Fire from my quoc, the U. S. A.
We might buy a city with it,
A rude awakening.

DAY BAO

To teach, instruct, educate,
As this day's buying
Has taught me.
In a northern farmland,
I watch a deer
Startled
Or a moth feeding on nettle,
Bewildered animals
Undernourished,
I might kill them in a minute.

LONG NGUYET

To enjoy the moon.
Its whorl of light
Imprints the land
Assuredly as a man might
Leave fingerprints
Upon a glass of water.



Lowell Uda

CHAPEL CUSTODIAN

“Put your tongue back in your mouth,” said Peggy, the head cashier.

“You know where I’d like to put my tongue?” Bill said, hitching up his pants and moving closer.

“Oh, go away,” she said.

He began to laugh.

Jay came around to her check stand, and the two men boxed her in. “Don’t you want to know, Peggy, sweet?” said Jay. “Don’t you?”

“No!” she said. “I don’t want to know!”

“Tell her, Bill,” he said. “Tell her, I want to hear.”

“On the back of your neck,” said Bill.

Both men guffawed, their mouths splayed, and together they went to sprinkle the vegetables.

One day, Bill walked around the store half the morning with an inflated bag sealed with scotch tape. He carried it carefully, and set it down carefully when he needed both hands to move a case of canned goods. Finally I said, trying to be off-handed:

“What d’ya got there, your lunch?”

“A fart,” he said.

A laugh broke from my mouth. “A bucket of steam, eh?”

“Here. Open it,” said Bill, handing me the bag.

I squeezed it. A weightless bag airtight. “You know,” I said, “you’ve been carrying this around for three hours.”

“Open it,” said Bill.

I tore open the bag, and sure enough, there was a fart in it; anyway, some putrid gas.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“Three of them,” said Bill, parting the tear with his hands.
“A little stale, though,” he said, beginning to laugh, a belly-laugh.
Then he whooped and he ran into the back room laughing loudly.

Barbara Uehara and I were not going together, but everytime I called, she was available. Why did I, I wondered, excite humility in girls?

It was she who called me and made the first date, a dance sponsored by the Young Buddhist Association. We played ping-pong and walked in the garden among the plumarias and honeysuckle. Then I got bored, as I usually did at dances, and I drove her home in silence. I remembered to say “Thanks.”

And why did girls always court me? Once the phone rang and my sister Esther answered. “A girl,” she said.

I said hello, an old grouch.

“Guess who?” said the pretty voice.

I guessed several names, revealing myself.

“Guess again?” she said. I heard giggling in the background.

“What is this horseshit,” I said. “State your business.”

Silence.

“I don’t have time to fart around,” I mumbled, and slammed the phone . . .

Brother Isaac had arranged for me to clean the chapel building for five dollars a week, and he did not give me the money but kept it in a little account entitled “Paul’s Missionary Fund.” I had said that until my father joined the church I would not allow him to support me on a mission. I grew so angry when Brother Isaac suggested my mother go to work that he conceded there were other

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

ways. He appointed me “Chapel Custodian” and said that sometimes the members of a ward can so want to send a worthy saint on a mission they will freely contribute to his support.

I cleared Brother Isaac’s desktop, and in so doing threw away a bobbypin clogged with earwax and a bit of blood, several chewed cinnamon toothpicks, and a handful of kleenex scribbled with words, phrases, broken sentences, all meaningless to me. When he saw my good work, Brother Isaac grew livid, shook with god-like anger, and I thought he was about to blaspheme. He forbade me to touch his desk. He said I should “tend to temporal matters” and “mind your own business.” But when he left, I went through his drawers and found three mayonnaise jars stuffed full of kleenex. I sat down in his chair and read them all.

“Sister Anna wore a red hat today.” There was reference to the pasture next to the chapel grounds. “Stiff wind this morning — odor of rotten eggs.” “Brother Ching can ring the bell.” “Moo!” And others. “John’s little girl recited the sacrament gem, and she bowed.” “. . . chew koa leaves after eating onions . . . or smoking a cigarette.” Nonsense notes like that. In one jar there was a note about me, dating back four years when he first became Bishop: “. . . cried when he bore testimony. Loves God, loves Jesus Christ, loves Joseph Smith, loves mother . . . and father, loves sister . . . loves everybody.”

“Well?” said Brother Isaac, looking up.

“Well, what?”

“Don’t talk to me like that, Paul,” he said. “I’m not your father.”

For a moment I watched him in silence. His moustache bore a dried-out chili seed.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“You mean about working?” I said.

He said nothing.

“I need the money.”

Nothing again.

“I’m going to buy a car, Brother Isaac.”

Slowly, he shook his head. “What are you interested in, Paul? Where do you think an old jalopy will get you?”

“Places.”

“Is it getting harder to stay at home, Paul? Don’t feel like being with the folks, don’t feel like studying, don’t feel like going to church?”

“Look,” I said, “I’m putting the money in the bank.”

“I don’t care what you do with your money, Paul.”

“Buying a car is only an idea. When it comes time to buy the damn thing, I’ll probably decide not to and keep the money for tuition.”

He began to scribble on a kleenex. And it infuriated me.

“What are you doing?” I practically demanded.

He put the pen down and said:

“Adds up to one hundred dollars even.”

“That’s not enough,” I said.

“It’s a beginning.”

“What if I decided to serve in the Army first?”

“No,” he said, “they don’t preach the gospel in the Army. The best plan, Paul, is to put in one good year at the University, then go on your mission. If working extra hours means you have to miss church, then I don’t want you to do it. I want you to fix your mind on one goal and persevere. And you keep using your old man’s car.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

I'll talk to him."

"One goal," I said, my mouth full of koa leaves. "O.k."

I said to myself: Every woman who comes into this store can be the solution to my problem, if I really have one. In mathematics, wasn't there something called a multiplier? Couldn't there be, then, for young men a Great Simplifier? I smiled at the lady-customers — all shapes and sizes — all potential Great Simplifiers.

Potential number one wheeled up to me when I was in the produce section piling watermelons on a counter. She had a baby in her loaded cart and two I-want-gimme brats hanging on the sides. There were lines of discontent in her rather ugly face.

"Will you pick me a sweet one?" she said.

I slapped the watermelon with my open palm.

"First crop," I said, my voice sticking. "But this is pretty good." I gave her the melon.

"Are you sure?"

I knew my business. I rolled a few melons around on the counter, then slapped a shiny, round, green one. I picked it up and slapped it — solid, watery, marblelike.

"This one's better," I said.

"Are you sure?" She touched the melon with a long finger.

I scratched her off my list.

"I'd stake my life on it," I said.

"Well, twelve cents a pound . . ." She paused, considering in her mind the price of melons throughout the town.

"I worked on a truck farm," I said. "It's a good melon."

"Twelve cents is pretty expensive . . ."

"Don't you trust me?" I said. "I worked on my friend's truck

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

farm once. You slap it like this. That's the way you tell a melon is sweet." I slapped the melon several times.

The store manager, standing near the cash registers, pricked his ears.

"I want a really sweet one," she said.

I slapped the melon again. "I don't know, lady," I said. "If I were buying one, I'd buy this one. And if it wasn't sweet, I'd put sugar on it."

The store manager walked over. He took the melon from me, slapped it, and put it down. There was no change of expression on his face. He picked up another melon, slapped it, and said, "This is it." He gave it to the lady.

"Are you sure?"

The store manager took the melon from her and put it down on the counter. He found a knife on top of the vegetable cooler and split the melon with two quick strokes. He sliced off a piece of melon-meat, stabbed it with the wet blade and said, "Eat it."

The lady looked at him, then at the knife thrust at her. She pinched the slice daintily and placed it on her tongue. "Wonderful!" she said. She took the two halves of the melon, grabbed her kids from the plastic toys rack, and fled to the check-out stand.

The store manager walked away. He had said nothing to me — not a word either way. I grew angry. How was I to know he wanted me to split melons? But then Mrs. Happy came in, helloing all the boys, her high heels clicking, and she wheeled up to the counter. She wanted a sweet, sweet one.

This time I picked up the knife right off.

"Watch this now," I said.

I jabbed the melon on its vulnerable belly with the stained blade-tip. The skin of the melon cracked and tore open deliciously.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

Juice dribbled out the crack.

“Pregnant,” I said. “Pregnant with sweetness, Mrs. Happy.”

“Oh, I’ll say it is! You’ve sold me.”

“I’ll slice a piece of the meat for you now.”

“No, no,” she said. “There’s no need. I’ll take it.”

It was easy. I discarded my list. What was important was the spirit of the thing.

“How is Mr. Happy?” I said.

“He’s still in Guam.”

“That’s a long time to be away.”

“Yes.”

She picked up a tomato and examined it.

“But he’s making a lot of money,” I said. “I mean, sending you his whole pay check every month.

“Well,” said Mrs. Happy, “there’s nothing he could spend it on there. You’ve got bad tomatoes.”

“Well, it’s this way, Mrs. Happy,” I said. “With all you lovely women coming in and having to pick up and finger each one personally, they’re bound to turn bad.”

“Well! How cruel!”

“It’s the truth,” I said.

“It’s the truth, but do you have to tell me?”

I opened the icebox under the display shelf. “Look at them,” I said, leaning on the siding glass. “Aren’t they nice, cool, tender red tomatoes?”

“Oh!” she said. “They’re beautiful!”

She looked at me, her eyes widening, her face opening with

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

desire for the cool red spherules.

“Now you wouldn’t be beautiful either if everybody went around poking things at you, bruising you, would you?”

It came out of my beating heart before I knew it. I laughed, and I thought I sounded like the men. She took in what I said, then she smiled.

“Now don’t be nasty. May I have some of these?”

“Sure,” I said, shrugging my shoulders. Quickly, she picked up and deposited the mellow tomatoes in a bag. “Do you like privacy, Mrs. Happy?”

“Of course,” she said, looking up. “A certain amount of privacy is necessary.”

“So do tomatoes need privacy,” I said.

“Oh, we aren’t as bad as all that.” She moved the fleshy spherules around in the cold box. I smiled, watching her small busy figure.

“I’m glad you can take a joke,” I said.

She got up and set the bag in the wagon. “Shame on you,” she said, “flirting with an old woman like me. You used to be such a nice boy.” Then she winked, and wheeled off down the aisle. When she came up the next aisle, she winked again, and laughed.

“Hey! Paul! What the hell are you doing?”

I jumped; the skin of my loins shrivelled and crawled. The suddenness of the voice, the darkness, I said to myself; otherwise I wouldn’t have jumped.

“Hey, White-Eyes, who you talking to?”

Amo’s voice. From the otherside of the fenced-in dance floor.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“Nobody,” I said.

I heard a girl giggle.

“Come on, don’t lie,” said Amo. “What’d you say?”

“Paul was praying,” said the girl. “He’s always praying.” She laughed maliciously.

“Hey, Paul,” said Amo.

“What,” I said.

“Come here.”

“Jesus Christ,” said the girl. “Wait a minute.”

Amo laughed. He lighted a match and shielded the flame with his hands. For an instant I saw the soft white buttocks of the girl. Then the flame flickered, on her distorted angry face, and her hand struck Amo’s glowing fingers.

It was all dark again, and ominously silent, except for the wind from the sea.

“AOW!” the girl bellowed suddenly.

“Jesus Christ,” said Amo, “the match was still hot.”

“You dirty bastard.”

I heard a loud smack. And then a louder one.

“Can’t you leave my ass alone?”

Amo grunted, and lunged at the girl, and they fell with a crash onto the rough board floor.

“AOW!”

The girl began to bawl.

Slowly, Amo raised himself over the writhing shadow of her naked figure.

“What’s the matter now?” he said.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

"I'm bleeding."

"What do you mean, bleeding?"

"I don't know," she blubbered, "but look!"

Amo lighted a match and brought the flame down to her white buttocks.

"It hurts," she said.

Amo blew the match out.

"Paul," he said. "Come here."

"No," said the girl. "I don't want him to see me."

"You want that thing out, or don't you?"

For a moment the girl said nothing, and then she began crying again.

"Don't worry," said Amo, "if he asks you to go to church, I'll bust his mouth."

He handed me the matches. I lighted one and cupped it. The small flame flickered and fluttered and died. I wasn't used to lighting matches. I lighted another one. The flame scorched my fingers, fluttered, then stood still.

Amo flicked open a knife with a four inch blade. Then he sat on the floor and threw one leg across the girl's naked back and the other across her naked legs.

"Bring it closer," he said. "Jesus!"

I blew the match out and lighted another one.

Amo scraped the small ooze of blood off the rough white skin and the girl flinched.

"Hey," I said. "You don't need a knife for that."

Amo stood up.

"You want to do it," he said.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“No, but . . .”

He snapped the knife shut and put it in his pants pocket.

“Give me the matches. You do it. She stinks.”

The girl stiffened and I dropped the hot burning matchstick.

“She’s not my girl,” I said.

“Gimme the goddamn matches.”

I watched his shadow warily. Then I handed the box of matches to him.

“Awright,” he said.

I stood looking at him.

“I’m getting cold,” said the girl.

“Paul,” said Amo, “get with it.”

Slowly, I kneeled. The girl’s face was hidden by the fall of her heavy black hair. She was one of the canoe club girls and her body was tanned all over except for the area of her buttocks, which was white. When I touched her, she squeezed the two fleshy mounds together tightly.

“I can’t do anything if you do that,” I said.

“I don’t trust him,” she whined.

“Shut up and relax,” said Amo.

The two mounds quivered. Then they softened, sinking. Quickly, I pinched up the skin and manipulated my fingernails about the end of the splinter.

“You’ve got soft hands,” she said.

“Shut up,” said Amo, blowing out the match. He lighted another one.

I could smell her. A strange foreign smell. And she had hair around her anus.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

"Take your time, Paul," she said.

I pulled it out and she yelled.

"Lemme see, lemme see," she said, raising herself.

Amo blew the light out.

"I want to see it."

"GET OUT OF HERE!" said Amo.

"What are you so mad about now? Oh, all right." She ran for her clothes.

"And bring my jacket!"

"Come and get it yourself."

Amo did not move, but watched the girl intently while she dressed.

"That's not Becky," I said.

"No."

"What's her name?"

"Winona Lopez." When we were sophomores and I was, to my consternation, voted "Best Groomed" in the class, she was among the dreamy-eyed girls who had giggly crushes on me. "Hurry up. Quit showing your ass off."

"I can't find my bra."

Amo handed me a cigarette.

"No," I said.

"Take it," he said, ominously.

I took the cigarette. It felt strange in my hand, between the index and middle fingers. Amo lighted us up. I began to cough.

"Paul! What are you doing?"

I heard a strange far-off cry of pain in Winona's voice.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“Smoking,” I said. “What else?”

I coughed.

And she laughed, a startled laughter.

“Gowan home,” said Amo, grabbing his jacket from her, “or I’ll pull the hairs around your asshole.”

Winona stood her ground, fixing her hair. “Mmm,” she said. “What nice hands . . . Goodbye!” She walked away, down the Pavilion steps, and into the shadows.

The lights of the Kaneohe Marine Base glimmered on the bay. All along the shore the dark trees moved soundlessly in the sea-wind, and the dark waves curled forward and spun into foam and a mild turbulence. I flicked the butt away. There was no moon in the sky yet.

Amo spread his jacket on the sand and removed his shoes. Then he took off his pants and underwear, folded them, and laid them neatly on his jacket. With his shirt gathered up on his broad chest, he waded into the water, squatted, washed his genitals, then came back. He stood before me, his sleek thighs drying in the wind. I remembered hearing that he had not been circumcized, and what I could make out of his penis was a shabby, shaggy affair.

He handed me another cigarette, which I took without hesitation, and lighted us up. “Let’s go find Tosh,” he said. “Get some beer.”

Groping for the doorway to the hall, my hands fell suddenly upon the slender shoulders of my sister Esther.

“What are you doing?” I said, angrily.

“I couldn’t sleep, Paul,” she said.

She followed me into the bathroom. When I had started the water running in the tub, I turned and found her eyes searching my face for where I had been, what I had done. “Get the hell out of

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

here!" I hissed, viciously, hurting her.

And she went, closed the door.

Quickly, my pants around my ankles, I squeezed paste on my toothbrush and scrubbed my teeth and tongue, to wash away the taste of the koa leaves I had eaten to kill the smell of tobacco. Green slime dripped from my lips. I sucked the pulling faucet, flushed the water about my mouth, and spat. With my teeth, I scraped more green slime off my tongue.

I had lowered my head into the bowl of the lavatory again, when I heard the door opening.

"Goddammit!" I said, hurling myself around.

But it was not Esther. It was my father. His sleepy face seemed to grow suddenly larger. He charged at me and struck me several times about the face. And I fell against the hamper and slid down between the toilet and the wall. He was a surprised and shaken man. I could see him trembling.

"Dad," I said. "I thought you were Esther."

But he would say nothing. His hands trembled as he urinated. And when he shook his penis drops of urine fell on me.

"Dad," I said. "It was a mistake . . . I'm sorry."

There were tears in both our eyes. But he could say nothing. His mouth moved but no words came out. Finally, he flushed the toilet and went out.

I shut off the water, removed my underwear and stepped into the tub. I heard Mother's mumbling voice in the bedroom. Then the bed squeaked. She came into the bathroom, dropped her pajama bottom about her fat knees, and sat on the stool. I soaped myself busily.

"Why, Paul, why?" she said.

"I don't know," I said.

Lowell Uda

Chapel Custodian

“Your father’s a good man,” she said. “Eat today, die tomorrow.”

“Oh, Mom!” I said.

She wiped the tangle of pubic hair with a wad of toilet paper and flushed the toilet. Then she pulled her pajama bottom up over her riven and broken belly.

“Where have you been?” she said.

“Just Kailua town.”

She looked at me for a long moment, unable to ask for more details.

“To the bowling alley,” I said, lying.

Suddenly, she bent over with an awkward movement, her lips descending toward mine, and she snuffed me.

“You’re a good boy, Paul,” she said. “A good boy.”

“I’m your son,” I said.

“Yes.”

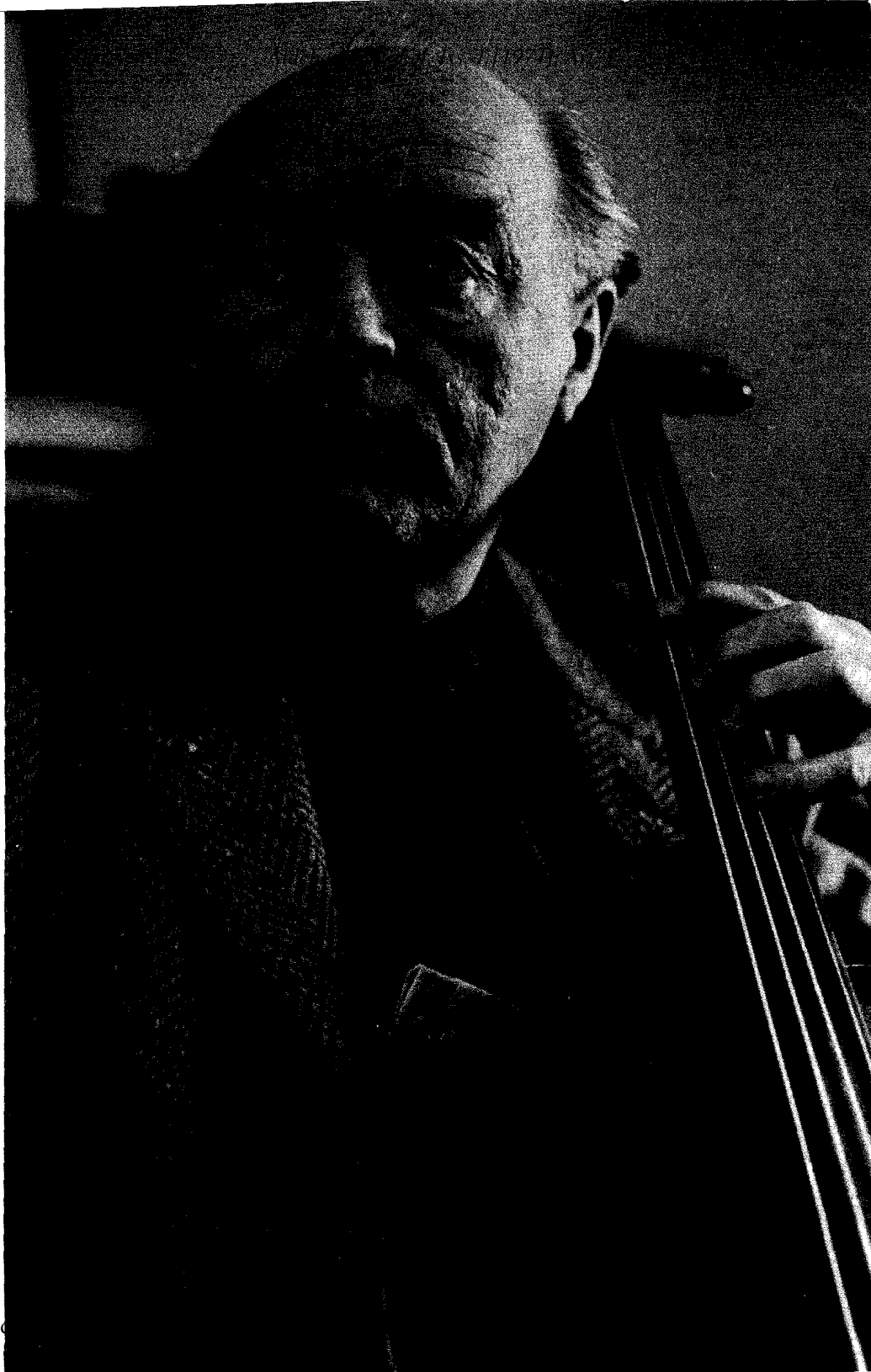
She moved to the door, which did not open fully because of all the clothes hanging behind it.

“Don’t forget to pick up your pants and hang it up,” she said.

I nodded my head sullenly.

“Good night.”

She closed the door. I heard her tossing in bed all the while I bathed and lolled in the warm water. Finally, I scrubbed myself, all my hairy parts, and sloshed out of the tub. With a towel wrapped around my waist, I stood before the mirror and picked my nose, looking at my green tongue in the glass a long, long time.



Alan Britt

DIALOGUE OF A YOUNG MAN AND A HIBISCUS

Young man
with eyes
of wren feathers
what have you
done to lose
so much hair,
and skin, so
many teeth,
so much blood?

What do you
see reflected
off the cattle's eyes
so far
in the distance?

"I have
been walking
for so long:
the blue cotton flower
breaks under my skin,
the thorns of the wild rose
crawl over my sleep's empty legs.
One evening
I met
a man who sleeps always
with his face
to the ground,
he told me
he waits
for the sound
of my skull
to collapse
under the earth."

Kim L. Horton

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT

The little universities flee
into themselves. Walking around
you're sure there are a few people here
that feel like cheerleaders in a graveyard.
Money is found in the bushes, but nobody smiles.
Another director is created to handle it.
Someone says something strange like, "I feel . . ."
And is hog-tied, hung from a tree limb
and sold to the highest bidder. Who usually
turns out to be the one repeating over and over,
"Aw, forget it." Darling. Let's go home
and read our palms again.
There's just got to be a flaw somewhere.



Lisa W. DuBois

FORTY YEAR SLUMP

In the cocktail lounge of the 4:50
Amtrak from New York to Providence
Whitey Ford's boyhood chum from
Queens gabbled his adventures
Of sandlot stickball

A bitch
A newscaster
And countless old ladies
Just in for a toddy or two
Listened attentively

I ain't made it nowhere God
Damn it and Whitey, he's known
By every God damned sonavabitch
In this fuckin country. What's
More nobody in New York could
Even dream about the number
Of homeruns I've hit

Just all of you think about that

Mr. friend of Whitey Ford
Halfway through a drawn out
Principle of it all speech
Fell dazed, quivering
Asleep, chomping the air
Amputating Whitey's arm —

Later belching out
A very sorrowful one bagger.



Kim L. Horton

FULL MOON

It seems to be,
God's scope. O the cross hairs
we hung him on that we know
all about. A fire in an ant farm.
The streets running red to black
and back again. Hope eloping
with the world famous subdued
rapist.

Maria Flook

GETTING YOU BORN

You are the round package, numb in me like a cool bud
still winter black. One month later, you are like a
steel fist warming up, your small pink fingers expand,
melting the dark. Now you feel spiny inside me, a large
artichoke asleep, wrapped in tight green skin. Soon I
feel the black feathers, your crow hands cling to the
veins, wild kindling sticks. Your beak sings a strange,
lonesome field language. Later, you are in motion, a
warm greased gear. Sometimes I feel you like a long oval
lake, brimming with fishes. The fishes are smooth wreaths
around you, they do not want to say good-bye. I try to
hold you in my hands, hating the belly between us. You
are clutching the cord of your first sleep, your only real
sleep. The last week, you feel like a farm melon, your
black seed eyes gleam through me. The minutes spin like
new gnats climbing the sky, their jerky paths lead here.
I am opening up like a beam. You have become the bright
headlight, and your bones arrive like electric sparks. I
see you for the first time, your arms of lightning. Your
face is a clear, open moon pulling my body like a tide.
A long ray, thin leg, kicks in my window. Now you are that
pale coin rolling across the night sky.

CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

VerKuilen Ager majors in Creative Writing at RWC and writes prose as well as poetry. He has recently read his work at school and in town.

Anthony Jarzombek has had poems in *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Ploughshares* and *Road Apple Review*. He is a 1971 graduate of RWC and received his MFA at the University of Oregon. He is presently living in Lincoln, R. I.

Doug Meyers is the Student Senate President at RWC.

Bruce Allen is a Sophomore Creative Writing major at RWC.

John Smolens writes to us from Newburyport, Mass.

Titus Blade Steele's ink drawings are being exhibited at the Ainsworth Gallery in Boston. His sculpture is being shown at the Andover Gallery in Andover, Mass. He lives in Newburyport, Mass.

Kim L. Horton lives in Newport.

Louis Phillips has been published in *Mademoiselle* and writes from N. Y. C.

Richard Yelle is a glass blower and lives in a rustic stable in Providence. He is a graduate student at R.I.S.D.

Lowell Uda is from the English Dept. at the University of Montana.

Alan Britt is a widely published Immanentist.

Lisa DuBois is an RWC student and Creative Writing Major who has been in previous Aldebaran issues.

Maria Flook is a 1974 graduate of RWC who has been published in *Penny Dreadful* and *Intro 6* among other magazines. Her poems will be included in an anthology of *New Young Women Poets* to be published in 1975.

Otto Van Kopenhagen (portrait) is a cellist who formerly travelled with Toscanini. He lives in Providence.

Editor
Lou Papineau

Poetry Editor
Jan Long

Prose Editor
James H. McCann

Art Editors
Sandra Grossi
James Rafferty

Poetry Readers
Cindy Brafman
Cliff Saunders
Roselyn L. Wimbish

Prose Readers
Enid Farber
Neil Harris
Tom Powers

Layout
Staff

Cover Photograph
Richard Yelle

Advisor
Robert L. McRoberts

VerKuilen Ager
Bruce Allen
Alan Britt
Lisa DuBois
Maria Flook
Kim L. Horton
Anthony P. Jarzombek
Doug Myers
Louis Phillips
John Smolens
Titus Blade Steele
Lowell Uda
Richard Yelle